

Occurrence of Rare Birds at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Yolo County, California

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Establishment of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area resulted in the creation of a diverse mixture of managed wetland habitats and allowed greatly increased public access. Since its establishment, visitors to the Wildlife Area have accumulated an impressive number of sightings of species that are considered to be of rare occurrence in Yolo County and the Central Valley as a whole.

Thirty-six records of 24 highly rare species known from the area are listed in Table 1. Other more regularly occurring rarities include American and Pacific Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica* and *P. fulva*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*), and Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*). Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) has been nearly annually since 2001, making YBWA possibly the best place in North America to see this species.

In addition to these rarities, the following uncommon species are regular nesters in small numbers within the Wildlife Area: Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*), Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), and the *rubea* subspecies of Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). Snowy Plovers (*Charadrius nivosus*) and Wilson's Phalaropes (*Phalaropus tricolor*) have nested twice.

Ruff
16 Mar 08.
Yolo Basin
Wildlife Area,
Yolo County, CA.

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Table 1. Sightings of species rare to Yolo County and the Central Valley at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, 1997-2015.

Species	Date First Observed ¹	Observer
Swamp Sparrow (<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)	23 Jan 2015	Leo Edson
Black Scoter (<i>Melanitta Americana</i>)*	25 Nov 2013	Ken Ealy
Glossy Ibis (<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>)	28 Jul 2013	Todd Easterla
Long-tailed Duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>)	14 Dec 2012	Jenn McKenzie, Dan Smith
Franklin's Gull (<i>Leucophaeus pipixcan</i>)	28 Oct 2012	Claire Gallagher
Brewer's Sparrow (<i>Spizella breweri</i>)	20 Sep 2012	Todd Easterla
Brewer's Sparrow (2)	28 Aug 2012	Todd Easterla
Eastern Kingbird (<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>)	30 Aug 2011	Mary Schiedt
Common Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)	25 Aug 2011	Todd Easterla
Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii</i>)(4)	7 May 2011	Ed Whisler
Red-throated Pipit (<i>Anthus cervinus</i>)	19 Oct 2010	John Sterling
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (<i>Caladris acuminata</i>)	7 Oct 2010	Scott Hoppe
Brewer's Sparrow	4 Sep 2010	Todd Easterla, Kevin Guse
Glossy Ibis	25 Jul 2010	Todd Easterla
Bell's Vireo (5)	16 Apr 2010	Craig Swolgaard
Brewer's Sparrow	10 Oct 2009	Scott Hoppe
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4 Sep 2009	Todd Easterla
Red-necked Stint (<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>)*	30 Aug 2009	Todd Easterla
Emperor Goose (<i>Chen canagica</i>)	13 Jan 2008	Michael Perrone
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (2)	25 Oct 2007	Todd Easterla, Joan Humphrey

Table 1. continued.

Species	Date First Observed ¹	Observer
Long-tailed Jaeger (<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>)	25 Aug 2007	Many
Glossy Ibis*	25 Aug 2007	Todd Easterla
Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>)	29 Jul 2007	Todd Easterla
American Tree Sparrow (<i>Spizella arborea</i>) (2)*	20 Oct 2006	Veronica Armijos, Ann Pellegrini, Mary Schiedt, Sara Wheeler
Little Blue Heron (<i>Egretta caerulea</i>)	8 Aug 2006	Tim Fitzer, Cathie La Zier
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (2)	31 Oct 2005	Daryl Coldren
Harlequin Duck (<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>)*	23 Jan 2005	[shot by hunter]
Rusty Blackbird (<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>)	16 Nov 2003	Gary Fregien
Common Nighthawk (<i>Chordeiles minor</i>)	12 Aug 2003	Dave Feliz
Brewer's Sparrow	10 May 2003	Dan Tankersley, Ed Harper, Bill Grenfell
Red Phalarope (<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>)	26 Nov 2002	Al DeMartini
Long-tailed Duck	5 Feb 2002	Cliff Hawley
Sage Thrasher (<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>)	Date unk. 2001	Dave Feliz
Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)*	4 Feb 2000	Steve Hampton
Chestnut-collared Longspur (<i>Calcarius ornatus</i>)	27 Dec 1997	Todd Easterla, Kevin Guse
Swamp Sparrow	27 Dec 1997	Todd Easterla, Kevin Guse

*First county record (n=6)

¹Observations are first observations in each calendar year when observed.